

# PRAGMATIC REASON

# CHRISTOPHER HOOKWAY AND THE AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL TRADITION

Edited by Robert B. Talisse, Paniel Reyes Cárdenas, and Daniel Herbert



## **Pragmatic Reason**

Christopher Hookway has been influential in promoting engagement with pragmatist and naturalist perspectives from classical and contemporary American philosophy. This book reflects on Hookway's work on the American philosophical tradition and its significance for contemporary discussions of the understanding of mind, meaning, knowledge, and value.

Hookway's original and extensive studies of Charles S. Peirce have made him among the most admired and frequently referenced of Peirce's interpreters. His work on classical American pragmatism has explored the philosophies of William James, John Dewey, and Josiah Royce, and examined the influence of pragmatist ideas outside of the United States. Additionally, Hookway has participated in a number of celebrated exchanges with some of the most high-profile figures of twentieth- and twenty-first-century philosophy, including Karl-Otto Apel, Philip Pettit, Hilary Putnam, and W.V.O. Quine, through which his treatments of a large range of topics in epistemology and the philosophies of mind and language have been developed and promoted. The chapters in this book—which include contributions from several of Hookway's former students and colleagues—include studies of Hookway's engagement with the works of Peirce, James, and Dewey, his contributions to virtue epistemology, and his discussions of hope and pragmatist metaphysics.

*Pragmatic Reason* will be of interest to researchers and advanced students working on American philosophy, the history of analytic philosophy, and epistemology.

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- Christopher Hookway is Emeritus Professor of Philosophy at the University of Sheffield. He has made several contributions to pragmatism scholarship and topics in contemporary philosophy, including virtue epistemology. His publications include *Peirce* (1985), *Quine: Language, Experience and Reality* (1988), and *Scepticism* (1990), and two collections of essays on Peirce: *Truth, Rationality, and Pragmatism: Themes from Peirce* (2000) and *The Pragmatic Maxim* (2012).
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Robert Stern is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Sheffield, where he was Chris Hookway's colleague for many years. He has written on the relation between Hegel and pragmatism, with several essays on this topic in his collection Hegelian Metaphysics (2009), and two papers in *Philosophy Compass*. He has also edited two collections on pragmatism and idealism: Pragmatism, Kant, and Transcendental Philosophy (with Gabriele Gava) (2016) and "Idealism and Pragmatism," special issue of the British Journal for the History of *Philosophy* (2015). His other books include *Transcendental Arguments* and Scepticism (2000), Understanding Moral Obligation (2011) and The Radical Demand in Løgstrup's Ethics (2019).

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Joshua Wilson Black completed his PhD at Sheffield under the supervision of Christopher Hookway and Robert Stern in 2017. He is currently a postdoctoral researcher at the New Zealand Institute of Language, Brain and Behaviour at the University of Canterbury in New Zealand.



## Introduction

Robert B. Talisse, Daniel Herbert, and Paniel Reyes Cárdenas

It is a great honor to present this collection of 14 new essays celebrating the career and philosophy of Christopher Hookway. As these chapters attest, Chris exemplifies the chief virtues of an inquirer. He is at once a generous interpreter of others' ideas, an acute interlocutor, and an original and innovative thinker in his own right. Additionally, Chris' work displays a keen sensitivity to philosophy's history as well as a command of intellectual trends and developments in disciplines beyond academic philosophy.

No doubt his embodiment of these virtues helps to explain the uncommon breadth of Chris' philosophical work. He is a leading voice on topics as varied as skepticism, naturalism, rationality, intellectual virtue, the emotions, and the natures of meaning and truth. Moreover, Chris has contributed landmark essays about William James, Josiah Royce, and C. I. Lewis. His book-length studies of Charles Peirce and Willard Van Orman Quine remain essential reading for anyone looking to gain a command of those philosophers.

Yet Hookway's philosophy is unified by an abiding concern with rational inquiry. His recognition that inquiry is a kind of *conduct*—something that we *do*—is what drew Chris to the classical pragmatism of Charles Peirce and the epistemological themes of belief, doubt, curiosity, rationality, and knowledge that animate all of Chris' philosophy. In Chris' view, a suitably nuanced rendering of the Peircean conception of inquiry—along with its attendant views about meaning and truth—provides the philosophical core of a viable model of human rationality, construed broadly to encompass characteristically human intellectual and axiological pursuits. Following Peirce, Chris understands that as inquiry is a kind of conduct, our pursuits of knowledge and understanding are ultimately endeavors to realize value and live well. In this way, the core of Hookway's philosophy is definitively pragmatist: philosophy is a normative enterprise.

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Christopher Hookway was born in Tonbridge, Kent, on January 20, 1949, and grew up in Broadstairs, where he attended Chatham House Grammar School in Ramsgate. He became the first in his family to attend university when he was accepted for the BA in politics, philosophy, and economics at Trinity College, Oxford, in 1967. It was at Oxford that Chris met his partner Jo, and their Golden Wedding Anniversary was celebrated in 2021. Having studied economics at A-level, this subject had been the original focus of Chris' undergraduate studies. It was not until the final year of his degree that, under the tutelage of W. H. Newton-Smith, Chris' attention shifted primarily to philosophy.

Following his graduation from Oxford in 1970, Chris proceeded to the University of East Anglia, where he conducted his studies for a BPhil in philosophy, which was awarded in 1972. Under the encouragement of Bernard Williams, who had acted as the external examiner for his BPhil and was soon to become his doctoral thesis supervisor before being replaced by Ian Hacking, Chris registered in 1972 for a PhD in philosophy at Churchill College, Cambridge. He was William Stone Research Fellow at Peterhouse, Cambridge, from 1974 and was awarded his PhD in 1977.

After completing his doctorate, Chris took up a lectureship at the University of Birmingham, where he remained until 1995, becoming a reader in 1988 and a professor in 1992. From 1980 to 1981, Chris was a Fulbright American Studies Fellow at Harvard University, returning to the United States in 1990 for a Visiting Fellowship at Pittsburgh. By the time of his appointment as Professor of Philosophy at the University of Sheffield in 1995, Chris had become an esteemed scholar of pragmatism and American philosophy, and he was that year made President of the Charles S. Peirce Society. Chris was President of the Aristotelian Society from 1995 to 1996 and the Mind Association from 2007 to 2008. He was Chair of the Analysis Trust Committee in 2008 and Editor of the European Journal of Philosophy from 2012 to 2014. During his affiliation with the Sheffield Philosophy Department, Chris supervised several doctoral theses on pragmatism and American philosophy, a number of whose authors are contributors to the present volume. Chris participated actively in the intellectual and social life of the department and became extremely popular among his students and colleagues, delivering courses on pragmatism, Hegel, epistemology, and philosophy and film. Before the effects of Posterior Cortical Atrophy took hold in 2017, Chris enjoyed walking, playing bridge, watching cricket, and the films of Akira Kurosawa. He retired from teaching in 2017 and became Emeritus Professor of Philosophy at the University of Sheffield.

These 14 chapters reflect the scope, depth, and impact of Chris' philosophical work. Rather than providing a summary of each contribution, we will instead let the chapters speak for themselves. However, some orienting remarks about the overall contours of the collection are in order. We begin with a chapter that Chris co-authored with Mara-Daria

Cojocaru on the vexed but crucial issue of the role of community in Peirce's conception of inquiry. Joshua Forstenzer then places Hookway within the context of the ongoing and expanding cannon of pragmatist philosophy, emphasizing the ways in which Hookway's philosophical views informed his pedagogical practice. From there, chapters by Andrew Howat, Paniel Reyes Cárdenas, Daniel R. Herbert, and Gabriele Gava critically engage Hookway's interpretation of Peirce, focusing on the central topics of truth, existence, the nature of transcendental arguments, and the scientific method. Cheryl Misak then draws upon Hookway's style of reading the history of twentieth-century philosophy in drawing some new lessons about pragmatism and the a priori from two pivotal post-Deweyan pragmatists, C. I. Lewis and Frank Ramsey.

These opening seven chapters establish the pragmatist roots of Hookway's thinking, highlighting the ways in which Hookway's Peirceanism is a living, developing philosophy capable of holding its own in debates with contemporary interlocutors. The next two chapters—by Sami Pihlström and Graeme A. Forbes—begin to situate Hookway's own philosophical orientation in a contemporary context by situating it within current debates over inquiry, the nature of pragmatism, and the status of metaphysics. These in turn set the stage for the remaining five chapters, by Neil Williams, Elizabeth F. Cooke, Joshua Wilson Black, Scott Aikin, and Robert Stern. Each of these authors critically examines one of Hookway's first-order philosophical theses concerning the conduct of inquiry, often challenging Hookway's views and proposing an improved alternative. In the end, then, this volume does not only celebrate Chris Hookway's academic career and contributions to philosophy. It also demonstrates the vitality of Chris' version of pragmatism.

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